1997

Perceptions of Parents of Elementary Students in Paris Union School District #95, Paris, Illinois, Regarding Curriculum Trends, Instructional Techniques, and Support Services

Lorraine A. Bailey
Eastern Illinois University

THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates (who have written formal theses)

SUBJECT: Permission to Reproduce Theses

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

PLEASE SIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

_____ 7-23-97

Author Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis to be reproduced because:

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

Author Date

Perceptions of Parents of Elementary Students in Paris Union School District #95, Paris, Illinois, Regarding Curriculum Trends, Instructional Techniques, and Support Services

BY

Lorraine A. Bailey

FIELD EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

SPECIALIST IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1997

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS FIELD EXPERIENCE BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

7/23/97
DATE

ADVISOR

7/23/97
DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD

Abstract

The purpose of the field study was to ascertain the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95, Paris, Illinois, regarding curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services. Addressing these areas was believed to be one important component in the process of determining the extent of the need for new or remodeled facilities at the elementary level in the district.

The researcher believed facilities of the future may be significantly different from their predecessors depending upon the nature and extent of curriculum changes. Before new facilities were proposed for Paris Union School District #95, it was important to ascertain needs pertaining to the most desirable learning environments advantageous for maximizing learning into the 21st century. It was believed that perceptions of elementary parents would be beneficial input to the district as the process of studying facilities was undertaken.

The field study utilized a review of literature and research about future curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services. A questionnaire was developed after summarizing the key points of the literature and research. The questionnaire was sent to 525 parents of students in grades K-5 at all of the four elementary attendance centers located in Paris Union School District #95. Parents indicated on the questionnaire how important they felt the listed items would be in their children's education as they prepared for a life in the 21st century. Three hundred forty seven or 66% of the parents responded to the questionnaire.

Parents generally perceived the core curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, social sciences, science, physical education and health, and fine arts as being very important in their children's educational future. Additionally, technology was considered very important by the parents for their children's educational future. Parents marked the very important or moderately important categories 45% to 98% of the time for the items under curriculum areas. The core subject areas of language arts,

mathematics, science, and social science, as well as the technological area of basic computer usage, were rated higher than the core areas of physical education and health and fine arts. The technological areas of internet usage and instructional television were not rated as highly in the very important response category as were the other technological areas. Very few responses were recorded in the somewhat important category for the items under curriculum areas. There were hardly any responses in the not important response category except for the fine arts items.

Parents did not rate the items under instructional techniques as often in the very important response category as they did for the items under curriculum areas. They marked the very important and moderately important categories 73% to 98% of the time for the items under instructional techniques. There were few responses in the somewhat important category and hardly any responses in the not important category.

Parents rated support services much as they did instructional techniques. The percentages ranged from 41 to 85 in the very important response category. When the very important and moderately important categories were combined, parents rated the items 72% to 96% as being important in their children's educational future. There were several responses in the somewhat important response category and a few responses in the not important category.

It was concluded that elementary parents in Paris Union School District #95 have a traditional view of education. They perceived the basics, as well as knowing how to operate a computer, as being very important in their children's educational future. It was also concluded that parents did favor research-based instructional techniques. A third conclusion was that while over half of the parents favor social services, they may not be aware of mandated social services or do not highly favor having them offered in the schools. A final conclusion was that Paris Union School District #95 may not have the facilities to adequately provide the items parents indicated were important.

Recommendations included better communication or inservicing of parents, examining existing space in current facilities for new or expanded programs as suggested by the parents, another survey of parents and possibly other community members regarding their desire for new or remodeled facilities, and finally, studying the many other aspects of facilities.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Overview of the Problem

Background

In the researcher's opinion, the last quarter of the century has presented unprecedented changes in most aspects of social existence and has touched the lives of all in many ways. These changes are making their marks on schools because the purposes of schools are often influenced by changes in society. Since the world is constantly changing, schools must change to maintain their utility. In the future, various aspects of the elementary school, such as curriculum, instructional techniques, and support services, may well be significantly different from their predecessors. Depending on the nature and the extent of changes, the facilities in which these will be delivered may also be quite different.

According to the United States General Accounting Office (1995, p. 3), school facilities that can support educational reform activities and technologies will not resemble or operate as schools built in the past. The United States General Accounting Office (1995) report indicated, "Rather than uniform sized classrooms with rows of desks, a chalkboard, and minimal resources such as textbooks and encyclopedias, schools prepared to support 21st century education would have flexible space" (p. 3).

The researcher believes that as educators discuss the proposed academic standards which will become the basis for curriculum in Illinois public schools, educators must consider the facilities in which curriculum will be delivered. Information compiled by the U. S. General Accounting Office (1996, p. 3) indicated that the quality of the learning environment does affect the education children receive.

The topic of learning environments is of interest to the elementary staff in the K-12 district of Paris Union School District #95 because the district's facilities are older buildings. The district consists of four elementary school buildings--two primary (K-2) facilities and two intermediate (3-5) facilities. These buildings were constructed in 1952,

1956, 1907, and 1911 respectively. The researcher believes that the age of these buildings is a factor which may affect the quality of the learning environment, and according to the United States General Accounting Office findings, may also affect the education of the district's students. Before new facilities are proposed for Paris Union School District #95, it is important to ascertain needs pertaining to the most desirable learning environment advantageous for maximizing learning into the 21st century.

Statement of the Problem

Before taxpayers are asked to fund new or remodeled facilities, district personnel should determine if there is a need for such a large monetary undertaking. One aspect of studying the extent of the need is to consider future curriculum, instructional techniques, and support services trends, as related to a high quality educational program. An important source of input for determining such trends is the perceptions of elementary parents. The specific problem addressed by this study was: What are the perceptions of elementary parents regarding curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services in the schools?

Research Questions

The study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding curriculum areas and instructional techniques in the six core learning areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical development and health, and fine arts) and technology?

2. What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding increased support services provided for children in the schools?

Assumptions

It was assumed that updated and quality facilities are needed to offer educational programs and that if these types of facilities are not available, the programs may be

limited in scope. It was further assumed that limited programs may affect student achievement and student potential to succeed, not only in the school environment, but also later in life. Parent input is important in helping to determine facility needs of elementary students.

Limitations

The following limitations existed:

1. The questionnaire was limited to parents of children in attendance at the four elementary attendance centers, housing children in grades K-5, located in Paris Union School District #95 during the 1996-1997 school year.

2. Parents were the only reference group utilized. Teachers, students, and other community groups were not surveyed because of cost and time limitations.

Delimitations

The following factors were placed outside the scope of this study:

1. The study considered only current curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services at the elementary level.

2. While several issues could be addressed in a study of facilities (e.g., heating, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, structural, demographics, space flexibility), this study explored only future curriculum trends and instructional techniques, the parents' identified need for curriculum changes, and the parents' desire for increased support services.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions are germane to understanding this study:

Infrastructures and facilities. These terms were used interchangeably and were defined as any buildings within the district in which students attend classes.

Curriculum. This is the course of study set by the district for the total education of its students. This includes, but is not limited to, the six core learning areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social sciences, physical education and health, and fine arts.

Multiple-intelligence instruction. Delivery and instruction in the context of understanding that there are many or multiple types of intelligence.

Support services. These are services provided for students within the school setting and include full-day kindergarten, social and health services, counseling, before-school and after-school care, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, parental activities and education, speech therapists, and psychological testing.

Uniqueness of the Study

Since Illinois does not have a systematic way of funding new facilities, many of the schools in Illinois need to be renovated or replaced. The buildings in Paris Union School District #95 are no exception. This study began the process of determining the extent of the need for new or remodeled facilities at the elementary level in Paris Union School District #95.

Chapter 2

Rationale, Related Literature, and Research

When changes occur in grade configurations, curriculum is upgraded, new services are provided, or enrollment fluctuates, then facilities must be examined (Glass, 1994a, p. 14). The types of programs offered affect facilities. Facilities must be examined for available space to house educational programs and auxiliary activities. The quality of that space must also be determined. The researcher reviewed literature and research on future elementary curriculum trends in the six core learning areas (language arts, mathematics, science social science, physical development and health, and fine arts) and technology, changing instructional techniques, and support services provided in the schools, as they related to possible changes in facilities.

Rationale

Paris Union School District #95 has old buildings and may have to upgrade its facilities. Important considerations when upgrading facilities are future curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services. Further, the perceptions of parents regarding curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services are beneficial input to the district as its personnel undertake the process of studying facilities.

Literature and Research Reviewed

General instructional techniques. To succeed in the 21st century, students must do more than master the basic skills. Students must be able to analyze and understand information, solve problems, adapt to fast-paced change, prepare written compositions, and learn new skills throughout their lives. These skills must be applied to the real world in a climate of pervasive change (Anderson, 1995, p. 34; Cawelti, 1995, p. 1; Eggebrecht et al., 1996, p. 5; National Research Center on Student Learning, 1993, p. 1).

The core learning areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical development and health, and fine arts will see change not so much in content, but in the approach to teaching that content. The teacher will be more a facilitator than a

lecturer as new directions in curriculum call for a new kind of teaching (Anderson, 1995, p. 34). Students will be less likely to absorb information passively and more likely to use information in an activity-oriented program with hands-on work, group work, and dialogue about content (Anderson, 1995, p. 34; Squire, 1995, p. 73). Strategies that require students to get out of their seats and interact with peers in the decision-making process will be more effective (Colwell, 1995, p. 29; Eggebrecht et al., 1996, p. 5). Students will be encouraged to use visual images to express their thinking and to use drama and movement (Colwell, 1995, p. 29). By connecting thought, feeling, and movement, a sense of wholeness will be developed within the student. Teachers will use collaborative learning techniques, integrated curriculum approaches, and multiple-intelligence instruction with many interdisciplinary units (Hay, 1993, p. 1).

Language arts. Squire (1995) stated, "Reading, writing, and oral language are the bedrock subjects of the curriculum, for they develop the competencies on which virtually all subsequent instruction and learning depends" (p. 71). Students will need opportunities to prepare and practice language in various forms of oral discourse. Students will also actively engage in the writing process (Squire, 1995, p. 79). A learning center or media center with its wide range of materials will be an important part of the unified language arts curriculum (Perry, 1995, p. 89; Shepherd & Ragan, 1992, p. 372). Students must have opportunities to discuss what they have read and make reading a part of their lives (Squire, 1995, p. 71).

Mathematics. The objectives of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics include problem solving, communication, reasoning, connections, estimation, number sense and numeration, whole number operations, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, statistics and probability, fractions and decimals, patterns and relationships, and algebra. These standards will change how mathematics is taught. Use of small groups of students to work on activities and problems and long-term use of manipulatives, calculators, and computers will increase math achievement. These

methods will both enrich and extend the curriculum of the future (Alper, Fendel, Fraser, & Resek, 1996, p. 19; Grouws, 1995, p. 105; Shepherd & Ragan, 1992, p. 402). The benefits of guided student inquiry and discovery will be reflected in higher test scores (National Research Center on Student Learning, 1993, p. 2).

Science. The science curriculum will emphasize skills similar to math skills: observation, measurement, experimentation, interpretation, model construction, and the prediction of consequences (Gabel, 1995, p. 123; Prescott, Rinard, Cockerill, & Baker, 1996, p. 12). These hands-on, inquiry-based instructional techniques are more effective teaching strategies if students work in cooperative groups and if there are adequate facilities and equipment (Gabel, 1995, p. 125; Shepherd & Ragan, 1992, p. 472). The overall emphasis will be upon the development of scientific literacy. The sciences will be further integrated, unified, and related to all curriculum areas (Eggebrecht et al., 1996, p. 8).

Social sciences. Social studies will become more global as schools in the 21st century prepare students for a world in which new realities replace familiar geopolitical boundaries and economic assumptions (Ramler, 1991, p. 44). These circumstances will call for effective global education, including issues that cut across national boundaries and the interconnectedness of systems such as ecological, cultural, economic, political, and technological. Ramler (1991) stated, "Global education involves perspective taking, seeing things through the eyes, minds, and hearts of others; and it means the realization that while individuals and groups may view life differently, they also have common needs and wants" (p. 45). Teaching these ideas in the social science disciplines and increasing the utilization of affective education will be emphasized. Family life, ecological, economic, global, law focus, and intercultural education will be added to the social sciences (Shepherd & Ragan, 1992, p. 446). Contemporary history books will give more realistic portrayals of the past. Multicultural curriculum that reflects the nation's diversity and anti-bias curriculum that recognizes important contributions of various

groups will be introduced (Elkind, 1995, p. 14; Hu-DeHart, 1993, p. 51; Shaver, 1995, p. 153). Participating in the local community and performing tasks with real consequences will apply to the teaching of social studies (Boers & Caspary, 1995, p. 37; Shaver, 1995, p. 157). Civic lessons will consist of serious inquiry into local issues (Rappoport & Kletzien, 1996, p. 26).

Physical education and health. A quality physical education program that teaches students skills and knowledge necessary to participate in an active, healthy lifestyle will help students transfer a good self-image to the classroom (Ennis, 1995, p. 111). Ennis (1995) found that students in a good physical education program "learn fundamental movements, skills, sport, dance, and fitness activities. Learning occurs in an atmosphere that is enjoyable and that entices students to develop positive attitudes toward physical activity" (p. 111). Skills taught in physical education will help students become responsible for their lifestyles and develop a strong sense of self. These skills are viewed as preventive tools to withstand the perils of peers and society (Ennis, 1995, p. 112). The physical education program must have both inside and outside areas with adequate space for children to move freely and safely (Ennis, 1995, p. 113).

Fine arts. The fine arts, composed of music, visual arts, theater, drama, and dance, are recognized as a basic component in the education of all students (Colwell, 1995, p. 21). The arts foster critical thinking, problem solving, and cooperative learning skills, and help students assimilate other subject areas (Dahlgren & Yaffe, 1994, p. 4). Students master important critical and creative thinking skills and gain confidence in their ability to express themselves (Dahlgren & Yaffe, 1994, p. 1). A fine arts curriculum cannot be attained without consistent, long-term instruction (Colwell, 1995, p. 22). The arts can reach out to students not succeeding in other areas by providing alternative and diverse routes to academic and personal achievement (National Assembly of Local Arts Agency, 1996, p. 9).

Technology. Increased use of technology will be the biggest change in schools, with the microcomputer at the center of many curricular areas. For technology to serve the purposes of reform, it must be tied to a coherent, school-wide instructional agenda (Means, Olson, & Singh, 1995, p. 69). Technology will be important in achieving a vision of students working either singly or in groups on long-term projects that involve meaningful, challenging content. Technology will help students develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, interpretation, and design; furthermore, technology will provide remedial drill work (Means et al., 1995, p. 69). Technology can give students support for accomplishing curriculum area goals in all subject areas and have a positive effect on student attitudes (Means et al., 1995, p. 69; Mehlinger, 1996, p. 406).

The number of computers has risen dramatically in only a few years. In 1981 only about 18% of schools had one or more computers for instructional use; by 1994 this figure had risen to 98% (Mehlinger, 1996, p. 403). Technology will expand to include wide area networks, internet, instructional television, CD-ROMs, and videodiscs. Computers will be important as students take more responsibility for their own learning (Mehlinger, 1996, p. 406).

Technology cannot become a useful support for students' work if the students have access only a few minutes a week. Although putting only one or two computers into a classroom is ineffective, schools do not need a computer for every student (Means et al., 1995, p. 71). Approximately six to eight computers in every classroom are necessary to make technology projects feasible as technology-supported instruction requires high access to tools of technology and communication systems (Means et al., 1995, p. 71). As schools make technology part of the curriculum, they will face the challenges of physical infrastructure, funding, equity, and ongoing maintenance (Means et al., 1995, p. 70; Peha, 1995, p. 23).

Support services. Changes in society will cause changes in schools. These societal changes will include increases in the number of students from single families, the

number of females in the workforce, the use of drugs and alcohol, poverty and violence among children, and AIDS among children (Elkind, 1995, p. 14). As a result, schools will gradually assume parental functions. The full-day kindergarten provides working parents with high quality, affordable, full-day care for their children. Extended day programs for older children will also be more common (Elkind, 1995, p. 13). The teacher's role may shift somewhat from that of teacher to social worker, with the major concern being children's social and emotional development. Schools of the future will provide more child care, education for children with special needs, child support services, sex education, drug education, values education, and parental education (Miller & Seller, 1985, p. 339). These services will require smaller classes so that teachers can provide this support (Bracey, 1995, p. 89). Guidance counselors and social workers will also be needed in the elementary school to help provide this support. Staff additions will necessitate more office space for personnel and private areas for working with children.

Summary

Family life styles, economic competitiveness, increasing global interactions, multiculturalism, and new educational research in curriculum and instructional techniques will shape the direction of schooling in America. As these changes occur, curriculum will no longer be just reading, writing, and arithmetic. Curriculum will include not only content but also process. Processes such as how well students can think, problem solve, and work as members of a team will become important. The goal of instruction will be deeper understanding. Students will handle vast amounts of information from many sources as they work with life-related problems, issues, and questions. Implementation of these changes in the schools will require facilities that can support these activities. Accounting rules of the Illinois State Board of Education define the economic useful life of a school building as fifty years (Illinois State Board of Education, 1996, p. 4). After that time, major capital repairs will be needed. Schools constructed during the 1950s are wearing out quickly and are soon expected to join others on the inadequate list (Illinois

State Board of education, 1996, p. 6). A serious concern is that "if schools cannot provide students with sufficient technical support or facilities for instruction and services, they may not be providing equal opportunity for all students to learn" (GAO, 1995, p. 20). As America moves into the 21st century, its school facilities should too. Infrastructures should not get in the way of desired innovations. If schools are in no shape for the future, students may not be either.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Design

This was a quantitative field study which utilized a review of literature and research about future curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services. The dependent variable was the perceptions of parents regarding curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services. A true independent variable did not exist because parents who responded were not partitioned into subgroups.

The Parent Questionnaire (see Appendix) was designed to provide data to answer the questions listed here. The items from the questionnaire used to answer the following research questions are listed in parenthesis at the end of each question:

1. What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding curriculum areas and instructional techniques in the six core learning areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical development and health, and fine arts) and technology (items 1-36)?

2. What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding increased support services provided for children in the schools (items 37-51)?

The Parent Questionnaire items were designed and based on the review of literature and research presented in chapter 2 by the researcher. The key points from the reviews were put into summative statements. The survey was given to parents of students in the four elementary attendance centers located in Paris Union School District #95.

Sample and Population

Paris Union School District #95 is a K-12 district of 1,892 students located within the city limits of Paris, Illinois, a town of 9,000 residents. The elementary population is 730 students, which is 39% of the total school district population.

The population consisted of all parents who had children enrolled in one of the four elementary buildings in Paris Union School District #95. The sample was the 347 parents who responded out of a population of 525 families. The representativeness of the survey cannot be guaranteed because not all parents surveyed responded.

In order to ensure a family was not surveyed more than once, rosters and registration forms were obtained from each elementary building. The oldest elementary child in each family was identified. Questionnaires were sent home with the targeted children. This sample group consisted of 135 families from Memorial, 92 from Wenz, 129 from Redmon, and 169 from Vance. The total population was 525 families.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

As previously indicated, items for the questionnaire were developed after reviewing research and literature of future curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services and putting those ideas into summative statements. The 51 items for the questionnaire were grouped into the three categories of (a) curriculum, (b) instructional techniques, and (c) support services. Items under curriculum included (a) writing skills, (b) listening skills, (c) speaking skills, (d) library or media center, (e) reading for information, (f) reading for enjoyment, (g) basic math skills, (h) math for solving problems of everyday life, (i) math concepts, (j) learning-by-doing approach to understanding science, (k) education about the environment, (l) science laboratories, (m) global education in social studies, (n) studying social problems of the community, (o) understanding people of various races and cultures in the United States, (p) physical education program, (q) health education program, (r) dance, (s) drama, (t) music, (u) art, (v) knowing how to operate computers, (w) knowing how to access computer information, (x) internet, and (y) instructional television. Instructional techniques included (a) activity-oriented education, (b) hands-on use of objects to solve problems, (c) large group instruction, (d) instruction which allows for children learning in different ways,

(e) problem solving for real life situations, (f) small group instruction, (g) smaller class sizes, (h) children working in teams to solve problems, (i) children interacting in the decision-making process, (j) integration of different subject areas, and (k) analyzing and understanding information. Items under support services were (a) Title I, (b) speech therapy, (c) full-day kindergarten, (d) guidance counselors, (e) parent volunteer services, (f) parent education, (g) private areas for counseling and testing, (h) a place in the school for people from social services to work with students, (i) school nurse, (j) use of Public Health Department services in school, (k) before-school child care, (l) after-school child care, (m) occupational therapy, (n) physical therapy, and (o) adaptive physical education. Items 1 through 36 were used to answer the first research question and items 37 through 51 were used to answer the second research question.

Validity of the questionnaire was addressed by basing the items on current literature and research (content or face validity). Reliability was addressed by field testing the items and the questionnaire's directions. The questionnaire items and directions were field tested by the faculty and a parent group at Vance School.

After the questionnaire was developed and a cover letter written, all information was presented to the superintendent and board of education for their approval and support. A notice was sent home with all students the day after the board meeting to notify parents the questionnaire would be forthcoming. A sample questionnaire, along with instructions for the teacher, was hand-delivered to each classroom. The purpose of the visit was to also elicit teacher participation and explain any unanswered questions.

After the population of parents was chosen, the cover letters and Parent Questionnaires (Appendix) were sent home with students in envelopes addressed to the parents. Return envelopes were also enclosed. Parents were asked to return the completed questionnaires to school with their children within a twelve-day period. Parents were to use a check mark for each item listed on the questionnaire to indicate how important they felt that item would be in their children's education as they prepared for

life in the 21st century. Parents could select from the four categories of very important, moderately important, somewhat important, and not important. Parents were not asked to identify themselves on the questionnaire, although the questionnaires were numbered for recording purposes. A second reminder was sent to parents three days before the due date. Classroom teachers collected questionnaires from students and deposited them into large envelopes which were then collected on the final day designated for returning questionnaires. Of the 525 surveys sent home, 347 were returned for a return rate of 66%.

Data Analysis

Returned questionnaires were optically scanned by the technology coordinator for the district. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected for each specific research question. The analysis of the data was presented through tallies which represented responses by frequency and percentage.

Chapter 4

Results

Overview

This chapter presents the results for each research question separately. Data are presented in tables referenced to a particular research question.

Results

Results for research question 1. Research question 1 was: What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding curriculum areas and instructional techniques in the six core learning areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical development and health, and fine arts) and technology? Table 1 presents the results for research question 1 and is based on items 1 through 36 on the Parent Questionnaire.

Table 1

Results for Research Question 1 (Questionnaire Items 1-36)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
Curriculum Areas		
1. Writing skills		
(4) Very Important	271	78%
(3) Moderately Important	69	20%
(2) Somewhat Important	7	2%
(1) Not Important	0	0%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
2. Listening skills		
(4) Very Important	330	95%
(3) Moderately Important	14	4%
(2) Somewhat Important	3	1%
(1) Not Important	0	0%
3. Speaking skills		
(4) Very Important	302	87%
(3) Moderately Important	38	11%
(2) Somewhat Important	6	2%
(1) Not Important	1	0%
4. Library or media center		
(4) Very Important	219	63%
(3) Moderately Important	108	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	18	5%
(1) Not Important	2	1%
5. Reading for information		
(4) Very Important	296	85%
(3) Moderately Important	45	13%
(2) Somewhat Important	6	2%
(1) Not Important	0	0%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
6. Reading for enjoyment		
(4) Very Important	208	60%
(3) Moderately Important	122	35%
(2) Somewhat Important	17	5%
(1) Not Important	0	0%
7. Basic math skills (arithmetic)		
(4) Very Important	312	90%
(3) Moderately Important	32	9%
(2) Somewhat Important	3	1%
(1) Not Important	0	0%
8. Math for solving problems of everyday life		
(4) Very Important	302	87%
(3) Moderately Important	38	11%
(2) Somewhat Important	7	2%
(1) Not Important	0	0%
9. Math concepts		
(4) Very Important	235	68%
(3) Moderately Important	99	29%
(2) Somewhat Important	11	3%
(1) Not Important	0	0%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
10. Learning by doing approach to understanding science		
(4) Very Important	187	54%
(3) Moderately Important	138	40%
(2) Somewhat Important	22	6%
(1) Not Important	0	0%
11. Education about the environment		
(4) Very Important	212	61%
(3) Moderately Important	114	33%
(2) Somewhat Important	19	5%
(1) Not Important	2	1%
12. Science laboratories		
(4) Very Important	142	41%
(3) Moderately Important	154	44%
(2) Somewhat Important	49	14%
(1) Not Important	2	1%
13. Global education in social studies		
(4) Very Important	150	43%
(3) Moderately Important	149	43%
(2) Somewhat Important	44	13%
(1) Not Important	4	1%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
14. Studying social problems of the community		
(4) Very Important	167	48%
(3) Moderately Important	144	41%
(2) Somewhat Important	33	10%
(1) Not Important	3	1%
15. Understanding people of various races and cultures in the United States		
(4) Very Important	174	50%
(3) Moderately Important	129	37%
(2) Somewhat Important	40	12%
(1) Not Important	4	1%
16. Physical education program		
(4) Very Important	167	48%
(3) Moderately Important	128	37%
(2) Somewhat Important	46	13%
(1) Not Important	6	2%
17. Health education program		
(4) Very Important	214	62%
(3) Moderately Important	99	29%
(2) Somewhat Important	28	8%
(1) Not Important	5	1%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
18. Dance		
(4) Very Important	43	12%
(3) Moderately Important	115	33%
(2) Somewhat Important	121	35%
(1) Not Important	68	20%
19. Drama		
(4) Very Important	52	15%
(3) Moderately Important	115	33%
(2) Somewhat Important	128	37%
(1) Not Important	52	15%
20. Music		
(4) Very Important	90	26%
(3) Moderately Important	146	42%
(2) Somewhat Important	91	26%
(1) Not Important	18	5%
21. Art		
(4) Very Important	93	27%
(3) Moderately Important	145	42%
(2) Somewhat Important	94	27%
(1) Not Important	15	4%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
22. Computers--knowing how to operate		
(4) Very Important	292	84%
(3) Moderately Important	42	12%
(2) Somewhat Important	10	3%
(1) Not Important	3	1%
23. Computers--knowing how to access information		
(4) Very Important	285	82%
(3) Moderately Important	45	13%
(2) Somewhat Important	15	4%
(1) Not Important	2	1%
24. Internet		
(4) Very Important	114	33%
(3) Moderately Important	125	36%
(2) Somewhat Important	77	22%
(1) Not Important	31	9%
25. Instructional television		
(4) Very Important	87	25%
(3) Moderately Important	139	40%
(2) Somewhat Important	93	27%
(1) Not Important	28	8%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
Instructional Techniques		
26. Activity-oriented education (think, explore, investigate)		
(4) Very Important	221	64%
(3) Moderately Important	106	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	19	5%
(1) Not Important	1	0%
27. Hands-on use of objects to solve problems		
(4) Very Important	249	72%
(3) Moderately Important	82	24%
(2) Somewhat Important	13	4%
(1) Not Important	1	0%
28. Large group instruction		
(4) Very Important	106	31%
(3) Moderately Important	145	42%
(2) Somewhat Important	81	23%
(1) Not Important	15	4%
29. Instruction which allows for children learning in different ways		
(4) Very Important	216	62%
(3) Moderately Important	107	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	23	7%
(1) Not Important	1	0%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
30. Problem solving for real life situations		
(4) Very Important	288	83%
(3) Moderately Important	52	15%
(2) Somewhat Important	7	2%
(1) Not Important	0	0%
31. Small group instruction		
(4) Very Important	193	56%
(3) Moderately Important	124	36%
(2) Somewhat Important	25	7%
(1) Not Important	5	1%
32. Smaller class sizes		
(4) Very Important	229	66%
(3) Moderately Important	90	26%
(2) Somewhat Important	20	6%
(1) Not Important	8	2%
33. Children working in teams to solve problems		
(4) Very Important	197	57%
(3) Moderately Important	131	38%
(2) Somewhat Important	17	5%
(1) Not Important	1	0%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
34. Children interacting in the decision-making process		
(4) Very Important	229	66%
(3) Moderately Important	106	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	11	3%
(1) Not Important	1	0%
35. Integration of different subject areas		
(4) Very Important	146	42%
(3) Moderately Important	163	47%
(2) Somewhat Important	35	10%
(1) Not Important	3	1%
36. Analyzing and understanding information		
(4) Very Important	249	72%
(3) Moderately Important	85	24%
(2) Somewhat Important	11	3%
(1) Not Important	2	1%

Note. Due to the rounding of numbers, not all percentages may total 100%.

Items 1 through 6 represented the curriculum area of language arts. Parents perceived this to be a very important area in their children's educational future. Ninety-four percent of the parents selected either the very important or moderately important category for each item 1 through 6. Listening skills (item 2) was rated as very important by 95% of the parents, whereas speaking skills (item 3) was rated very important by 87% of the parents. Ninety-five percent of the parents selecting the very important category

for listening skills represented the highest rating not only for items 1 through 6, but for all items on the questionnaire. For library or media center (item 4) only 63% of the parents chose the very important response category. Parents perceived reading for information (item 5) as more important than reading for enjoyment (item 6) by rating them 85% and 60% respectively in the very important category. Very few parents rated the items (1 - 6) for language arts as being only somewhat important, and hardly any parent selected the not important response category.

The curriculum area of mathematics was represented by items 7 through 9. Parents perceived this area as being important in their children's educational future. Ninety-seven percent of the parents selected either the very important or moderately important categories for each of these three items. Basic math skills (item 7) was rated by 90% of the parents as very important. Parents rated math for solving problems of everyday life (item 8) about the same, with 87% of the parents selecting the very important category. However, math concepts (item 9) was only rated by 68% of the parents as very important. Very few parents rated items 7 through 9 for mathematics as somewhat important. None of the parents selected the not important response category for mathematical items 7 through 9.

Science was represented by items 10 through 12 on the Parent Questionnaire. The items in this curriculum area were not rated as highly by parents in the very important response category as were the items in language arts and mathematics. Parents rated items 10 through 12 between the very important and moderately important categories more evenly. Eighty-five percent of the parents selected either the very important or moderately important category for each item 10 through 12. Science laboratories (item 12) was rated lower than learning-by-doing approach to understanding science (item 10) or education about the environment (item 11). Only 41% of the parents rated science laboratories (item 12) in the very important category, whereas 61% rated education about the environment (item 11) very important and 54% rated learning-by-doing approach to

understanding science (item 10) as very important. There was an increase in the number of parents selecting the somewhat important category when compared to the items in language arts and mathematics. As many as 14% of the parents selected this category for items 10 through 12. There were few parents who selected the not important response category for any of these three items.

Items 13 through 15 represented the curriculum area of social sciences. Parents rated this area much as they rated the curriculum area of science. Parents again chose the very important and moderately important categories almost equally. Eighty-five percent or better of the parents selected either the very important or moderately important category for each item 13 through 15. Parents rated these three items almost equally in the very important category. Fifty percent rated understanding people of various races and cultures in the United States (item 15) in the very important category. Forty-eight percent rated studying social problems of the community (item 14) in the very important category, and 43% rated global education in social studies (item 13) in this same response category. More parents rated items 13 through 15 as only somewhat important when compared to the items in language arts and mathematics areas. Parents selected this category 10% to 13% each time. There were few responses in the not important category.

Physical education and health were represented by items 16 and 17. Parents perceived health education (item 17) as more important than physical education (item 16) with percentages of 62 and 48 respectively in the very important response category. Parents still rated this as an important area with 85% or better marking the very important and moderately important categories for these two items. Much as with the previous curriculum area items, parents rarely selected the not important response category.

The curriculum area of fine arts was represented by items 18 through 21. Parents did not perceive this area to be very important in their children's educational future. Unlike the previous items, parents rarely selected the very important response category. Art (item 21) was rated as very important by only 27% of the parents, and music

(item 20) was rated by 26% in this same response category. Drama (item 19) and dance (item 18) were selected by 15% and 12% of the parents in the very important response category. Even when the very important and moderately important categories were combined, only 45% to 69% of the responses fell into these two categories. Responses were fairly evenly divided between the moderately important and somewhat important categories. There was quite an increase in the number of parents selecting the not important response category as evidenced by 20% of the parents selecting this category for dance (item 18) and 15% selecting this category for drama (item 19). These were not only the highest negative responses for items 18 through 21, but also the largest negative responses for all items on the survey.

Parents generally perceived the area of technology to be very important, except for internet usage and instructional television. Technology was represented by items 22 through 25 on the survey. Parents felt it was important for their children to know how to operate computers (item 22) and how to access information (item 23) as these two items were selected by 95% or better of the parents when the very important and moderately important categories were combined. Parents were more reserved on their view of internet (item 24) importance as only 33% of the parents rated it very important, and 22% rated it in the somewhat important response category. Parents held similar views on instructional television (item 25) with only 25% of the parents rating it in the very important response category, and 27% rating it in the somewhat important response category. There were 8% to 9% of the parents who rated internet (item 24) and instructional television (item 25) in the not important response category.

Instructional techniques were represented by items 26 through 36 on the Parent Questionnaire. These items will not be discussed individually as were items 1 through 25 under the topic of curriculum areas as they cannot be grouped by subject areas or categories. Parents did not rate the individual items under this topic in the very important category as often as they did for most of the items under the topic of curriculum areas.

The percentages ranged from 31 to 83 in the very important response category. However, when the very important and moderately important categories were combined, parents rated the items 73% to 98% of the time as being important in their children's educational future. A few responses were recorded in the somewhat important category and even fewer were recorded in the not important response category.

Parents rated some of the research-based instructional techniques fairly high in the very important response category. Parents did indicate that children interacting in the decision-making process (item 34), smaller class sizes (item 32), analyzing and understanding information (item 36), hands-on use of objects to solve problems (item 27), and problem solving for real life situations (item 30) were very important in their children's educational future. They chose the very important response category 66% to 83% of the time for these items.

Parents rated small group instruction (item 31), children working in teams to solve problems (item 33), instruction which allows for children learning in different ways (item 29), and an activity-oriented education (item 26) in the very important response category 56% to 64% of the time. Parents felt less strongly about large group instruction (item 28) and integration of different subject areas (item 35) rating them only 31% and 42% of the time in the very important response category. Parents indicated these were not as important to their children's educational future as other instructional techniques.

There are some inconsistencies between how parents rated similar items under curriculum areas and items under instructional techniques. Parents chose science laboratories (item 12) with 41% in the very important response category and learning-by-doing approach to understanding science (item 10) with 54% in the very important category. These are fairly low ratings in the very important response category; however, parents rated an activity-oriented education (item 26), hands-on use of objects to solve problems (item 27), and problem solving for real life situations (item 30) 64% to 83% of the time in the very important response category. The first two items are very similar to

the other three items in education. Learning-by-doing approach and science laboratories would be part of an activity-oriented education, hands-on use of objects to solve problems, and problem solving for real life. Studying social problems of the community (item 14) was rated by 48% of the parents in the very important response category, but problem solving for real life situations (item 30) was rated by 83% of the parents in the very important response category. Both are about studying or solving real problems in a child's life, but parents rated them very differently in the very important response category. Parents rated instruction which allows for children learning in different ways (item 29) with 62% in the very important response category. However, parents rated the areas of dance (item 18), drama (item 19), music (item 20), art (item 21), and physical education (item 16) low in the very important response category with 12% to 48% ratings. These are five areas which easily allow children to learn in ways different from the traditional approaches. Parents did not rate them the same at all.

Results for research question 2. Research question 2 was: What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding increased support services provided for children in the schools? Table 2 presents the results for research question 2 and is based on items 37 through 51 on the Parent Questionnaire.

Support services were represented by items 37 through 51 on the Parent Questionnaire. These items will not be discussed individually as were the items in curriculum areas since they cannot be grouped into subject areas or categories. Parents rated the items in this area much as they did the items under instructional techniques. Parents did not select the very important response category as frequently for the items under support services as they selected this category for the items under curriculum areas. The percentages ranged from 41 to 85 in the very important response category. However, when the very important and moderately important categories were combined, parents rated the items 72% to 96% as being important in their children's educational future. This

Table 2

Results for Research Question 2 (Questionnaire Items 37-51)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
Support Services		
37. Title I (extra help for below average readers)		
(4) Very Important	295	85%
(3) Moderately Important	39	11%
(2) Somewhat Important	9	3%
(1) Not Important	4	1%
38. Speech therapy		
(4) Very Important	270	78%
(3) Moderately Important	65	19%
(2) Somewhat Important	7	2%
(1) Not Important	5	1%
39. Full-day kindergarten		
(4) Very Important	163	47%
(3) Moderately Important	96	28%
(2) Somewhat Important	56	16%
(1) Not Important	32	9%
40. Guidance counselors		
(4) Very Important	198	57%
(3) Moderately Important	107	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	35	10%
(1) Not Important	7	2%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
41. Parent volunteer services		
(4) Very Important	191	55%
(3) Moderately Important	118	34%
(2) Somewhat Important	36	10%
(1) Not Important	2	1%
42. Parent education--how to help your child learn		
(4) Very Important	215	62%
(3) Moderately Important	104	30%
(2) Somewhat Important	27	8%
(1) Not Important	1	0%
43. Private areas for counseling and testing		
(4) Very Important	188	54%
(3) Moderately Important	114	33%
(2) Somewhat Important	34	10%
(1) Not Important	11	3%
44. A place in the school for people from social services to work with children		
(4) Very Important	146	42%
(3) Moderately Important	127	37%
(2) Somewhat Important	53	15%
(1) Not Important	21	6%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
45. School nurse		
(4) Very Important	230	66%
(3) Moderately Important	81	23%
(2) Somewhat Important	30	9%
(1) Not Important	6	2%
46. Use of Public Health Department services in school		
(4) Very Important	184	53%
(3) Moderately Important	103	30%
(2) Somewhat Important	37	11%
(1) Not Important	21	6%
47. Before-school child care		
(4) Very Important	143	41%
(3) Moderately Important	106	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	70	20%
(1) Not Important	28	8%
48. After-school child care		
(4) Very Important	150	43%
(3) Moderately Important	106	31%
(2) Somewhat Important	70	20%
(1) Not Important	21	6%

(table continues)

Areas/Topics	Frequency	Percentage
49. Occupational therapy for students having difficulty with fine motor skills such as poor handwriting		
(4) Very Important	214	62%
(3) Moderately Important	92	27%
(2) Somewhat Important	36	10%
(1) Not Important	5	1%
50. Physical therapy for students having difficulty with gross motor skills such as hopping or jumping		
(4) Very Important	198	57%
(3) Moderately Important	90	26%
(2) Somewhat Important	44	13%
(1) Not Important	15	4%
51. Adaptive physical education--modifications for students that have physical needs		
(4) Very Important	236	68%
(3) Moderately Important	80	23%
(2) Somewhat Important	24	7%
(1) Not Important	7	2%

was not quite as high as were the percentages for curriculum areas or instructional techniques when the two categories were combined.

The highest percentage given to any one item in the very important category was 85%. This was for Title I services (item 37). Other services that parents rated fairly high

in the very important response category were speech (item 38), adaptive physical education (item 51), and school nurse (item 45). These items were rated 66% to 78% of the time by the parents in the very important response category.

Parent education (item 42), occupational therapy (item 49), physical therapy (item 50), parent volunteer services (item 41), private areas for counseling and testing (item 43), and use of Public Health Department services in school (item 46) were rated 53% to 62% of the time by the parents in the very important response category. Parents rated full-day kindergarten (item 39), after-school child care (item 48), social services in the school (item 44), and before-school child care (item 47) in the very important response category 47% or less of the time.

As previously stated, when the very important and moderately important categories were combined, parents rated the items fairly high most of the time in these two areas. There were several responses in the somewhat important category with the individual items receiving from 2% to 20% of the responses. Some of the higher negative responses in this category included before-school child care (item 47), after-school child care (item 48), full-day kindergarten (item 39), a place in the school for people from social services to work with students (item 44), and physical therapy for students having difficulty with fine motor skills (item 50).

Every item under support services received at least one mark in the not important category. The percentages ranged from 1% to 9% in this category. Again, some of the higher negative responses were for full-day kindergarten (item 39), before-school child care (item 47), after-school child care (item 48), use of Public Health Department services in the school (item 46), and a place in the school for people from social services to work with students (item 44).

Services that parents were familiar with already such as Title I (item 37), speech therapy (item 38), and school nurse (item 45), were rated higher in the very important category. Adaptive physical education (item 51) was also rated higher than some of the

other support services. Parents may have been familiar with the term physical education and therefore rated it in the very important response category more often.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of the field study was to ascertain the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services. Addressing these areas was believed to be an important component in the process of determining the extent of the need for new or remodeled facilities at the elementary level in the district.

The study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding curriculum areas and instructional techniques in the six core learning areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical development and health, and fine arts) and technology?

2. What are the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding increased support services provided for children in the schools?

The study utilized a review of literature and research about future curriculum trends, instructional techniques, and support services. A questionnaire was developed based upon the key points from the review of literature and research. The survey was given to parents at all four of the elementary attendance centers, housing grades K-5, located in Paris Union School District #95. The analysis of the data was presented through tallies which represented responses by frequency and percentage.

Parents generally perceived the core curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, social sciences, science, physical education and health, and fine arts as being very important in their children's educational future. Additionally, technology was considered very important by the parents in their children's educational future. Parents marked the items in the very important or moderately important categories from 45% to

98% of the time. The core subject areas of language arts, mathematics, social sciences, and science, as well as the technological area of basic computer usage were rated higher than the core areas of physical education and health or fine arts. The technological areas of internet usage and instructional television were not rated as highly in the very important response category. Very few responses were recorded in the somewhat important category for the items under curriculum areas. There were hardly any responses in the not important response category except for the fine arts items.

Parents did not rate the items under instructional techniques as often in the very important response category as they did for the items under curriculum areas. The percentages ranged from 31 to 83 in the very important response category. When the responses in the very important category and moderately important category were combined for instructional techniques, parents rated the items 73% to 98% as being important in their children's educational future. There were few responses in the somewhat important category and hardly any responses in the not important category.

Parents rated support services in the school much as they did the items under instructional techniques. Parents did not select the very important response category as frequently for the items under support services as they selected this category for the items under curriculum areas. The percentages ranged from 41 to 85 in the very important response category. When the very important and moderately important categories were combined, parents rated the items 72% to 96% as being important in their children's educational future. This was not quite as high as the percentages for curriculum areas and instructional techniques when these same two categories were combined. There were several responses in the somewhat important response category and a few responses in the not important category.

Conclusions

The first research question was to determine the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding

curriculum areas and instructional techniques in the six core learning areas and technology. It was concluded from the responses on the Parent Questionnaire that parents in Paris Union School District #95 have a traditional view of education in regard to curriculum areas.

Parents rated traditional subject areas such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies very high in the very important response category. The highest ratings given to any one item in the very important category were items under curriculum areas. This was especially true of listening skills and basic math skills which received ratings of 90% or better in the very important response category. When the very important and moderately important categories were combined, most of the items under curriculum areas were rated in the high 90s. This was true of individual items such as listening skills, writing skills, speaking skills, reading for information, basic math skills, math for solving problems of everyday life, math concepts, reading for enjoyment, knowing how to operate computers, and knowing how to access information from computers. Parents rated these items 95% or higher. Parents also gave high ratings to library, learning-by-doing approach to understanding science, education about the environment, and health education program. Hardly any parents selected the not important response category and in most instances, it was not selected at all. In summary, it appears that parents perceive the basics, as well as knowing how to operate a computer to be very important in their children's educational future.

None of the fine arts items such as dance, drama, music, or art received high ratings from parents. It was surprising to the researcher that parents rated music so low in their children's educational future, since music has traditionally been considered a strong component of the Paris Union School District #95 curriculum. There is much support from the community for the many musical activities that occur. Music and art, the two curriculum areas currently offered, were rated slightly higher than drama or dance.

Parents also did not rate internet usage or instructional television very high in importance. This may result either from parents not understanding how these two items are used in schools or from negative publicity that is sometimes associated with these two items.

One way to interpret the results of the questionnaire is that parents want a basic or traditional approach to education for their children. Another way to interpret the results is that parents do not understand what is done in the schools of today or do not think that current practices are important in delivering this basic education. This was indicated by their responses under instructional techniques. Parents may not have a good grasp of what is done in education today besides the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These are topics or subjects with which they are very familiar. Parents may not have understood some of the educational terms that were used on the survey such as integration of different subjects, hands-on use of objects, or different learning styles. The fact that they gave similar items on the survey different ratings may indicate this.

Parents gave fairly high ratings to several of the instructional techniques when the very important and moderately important categories were combined. These may be the instructional techniques they have either heard of more frequently or believe to be important. These included activity-oriented education, hands-on use of objects, problem solving for real life situations, children working in teams to solve problems, children interacting in the decision-making process, and analyzing and understanding information. These were all rated 95% or higher by the parents. All of the items which parents rated as very important in their children's educational future are research-based techniques.

The second research question was to determine the perceptions of parents of elementary students in grades K-5 in Paris Union School District #95 regarding increased support services provided for children in the schools. It was concluded from the responses to the Parent Questionnaire that half or more of the parents believed these services to be very important in their children's educational future. This was especially

true if the very important and moderately important categories were combined. Items which parents rated the highest were the items which parents were most familiar. These included Title I reading services, speech therapy, and school nurse. Parents indicated that they wanted to know how to help their children learn better.

Many support services are mandated by the state or federal government, and schools have no choice but to offer the services to students who need them. Many parents may not be aware of this or may not be aware that schools are already providing many of these services. If parents are aware of these mandates, the results may indicate they do not fully support them or do not believe them to be services which schools should provide. Over half of the parents rated support services very important, but support services were not rated as highly as curriculum areas or instructional techniques. Some parents may not have children who require these services, and therefore do not believe them to be important in their children's educational future.

Paris Union School District #95 may not have the facilities to adequately provide many of the items that parents indicated were important under curriculum areas, instructional techniques, or support services. At least 65% of the parents indicated on all 51 items on the survey that they perceived these things to be very important or moderately important in their children's educational future. This was true except for the items of dance and drama.

Parents indicated a library or media center was important, yet this exists in a very limited capacity in Paris Union School District #95. The primary buildings have library books on a roll cart kept in classrooms. The intermediate buildings have books on shelves that occupy one half of a room. The other part of the room is used as office space for support teaching staff or is used as the learning disabilities classroom. A media center does not exist at all. Science laboratories do not exist in elementary facilities. Classroom experiments are done within the confines of the existing classroom space. The intermediate buildings have no physical education facilities at all. Students must have

physical education outside on days weather permits or inside the classroom on other days. This severely limits the curriculum. Primary students have the use of a multipurpose lunchroom to use on days when they cannot go outside. There are no music or art classrooms available in any of the buildings. Teachers of these two curriculum areas must carry the supplies and materials they need from room to room. Again, this limits the curriculum that can be offered. While parents indicated computers were important, only one newer computer exists in each classroom and must be shared by all students. There is no available space for a computer lab. The electrical wiring needs to be updated to support more computers.

Parents indicated hands-on use of objects, small group instruction, and children working in teams to solve problems were important. Again, classroom space is small and limits what can be accomplished. Teachers have limited storage space and manipulatives do require space. Cooperative groups and small group instruction also require flexible classroom space which is currently very limited. Parents indicated that smaller class sizes were important, yet there are no available classrooms for expansion. As the enrollment continues to increase, this may become even more of a problem.

Most of the support services currently offered in Paris Union School District #95 either work directly in the classrooms or out in the hallways. This is because there is no classroom space for them. While this may work for some programs such as Title I, it is not conducive for the guidance counselor, social workers, or psychologists who need private areas. Occupational therapy, physical therapy, and adaptive physical education personnel must work in the hallways if they cannot provide their services in the classrooms. This can be very distracting for the students. Again, it is because no extra available space exists. When the schools were built, many of these services were not mandated, so no room exists for them today. Even the school nurse must work out of the office or hallway since there is no other space. This does not work well when privacy is needed.

Recommendations

Better communication needs to exist with parents regarding what education and schools are about today. Parents in Paris Union School District #95 still seem to view education with a very traditional viewpoint. They do not seem to be aware of current educational trends or understand the new reforms occurring in the schools. Parents do not seem to understand the researched-based educational process or the services that must be offered in the modern classroom. Parents view schools as for traditional educational purposes only and not a deliverer of mandated social services. Communication that educates or inservices parents about curriculum, instructional techniques, and support services needs to occur. This can be accomplished through newsletters, parent conferences, parent meetings, or pamphlets. A better way to communicate this to parents would be to get them more involved in their children's education by having them into the school more often to see what is occurring in a classroom.

A second recommendation is to examine the existing space or lack of space in the current facilities for new or expanded programs. Parents indicated the importance of many of the curriculum areas, instructional techniques, or support services, yet there is no available space for them in the current facilities. If parents have indicated the importance of curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services, then the schools need to examine the potential to offer them. The condition or quality of space in the existing facilities also needs to be examined. It might be helpful to get as many different people as possible into the schools to see the facilities for themselves. They can see the problems of lack of space or overcrowded classrooms. They might be more supportive of future suggestions to remedy the problem.

A third recommendation involves a future study to survey parents and possibly other community members. The purpose of the survey would be to gather information regarding the desire for either new or remodeled facilities to provide the curriculum,

instructional techniques, and support services that parents indicated were important in their children's educational future. This question was not addressed in this study.

A final recommendation is to study other aspects of the existing facilities to determine the extent of need for new or remodeled facilities. This includes a physical assessment of the building including environmental, thermal, acoustical, and visual studies, as well as studies on the heating, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems. The physical assessment would also include the quality and appropriateness of the facilities and other factors such as air quality and space design. Architects would need to examine the structural condition of the schools, as well as the flexibility of the space in regard to available space and the suitability of that space to house educational programs and auxiliary activities. The future demographics of the district population would also need to be examined, as well as figuring building capacities using current state standards. Other factors to consider in a facility study are design efficiency ratios, technical capacities, practical capacities, size capacities, and classroom utilization assessments.

References

Alper, L., Fendel, D., Fraser, S., & Resek, D. (1996). Problem-based mathematics-not just for the college-bound. Educational Leadership, 53 (8), 18-21.

Anderson, R. D. (1995). Curriculum reform dilemmas and promise. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (1), 33-36.

Boers, D. & Caspary, P. (1995). Real-life homework. Executive Educator, 17 (3), 37-38.

Bracey, G. W. (1995). Research oozes into practice: the case of class size. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (1), 89-90.

Cawelti, G. (Ed.). (1995). Handbook of research on improving student achievement. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Colwell, R. (1995). The arts. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 21-42). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Dahlgren & Yaffe. (1994, December). Summary report on the greater Cincinnati arts education study. [On-line]. Available: http://www.aaae, org/caesumm-p.html.

Eggebrecht, J., Dagenais, R., Dosch, D., Merczak, N. J., Park, M. N., Styer, S. C. & Workman, D. (1996). Reconnecting the sciences. Educational Leadership, 53 (8), 4-8.

Elkind, D. (1995). School and family in the postmodern world. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (1), 8-14.

Ennis, C. D. (1995). Physical education. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 111-122). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Gabel, D. (1995). Science. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 123-143). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Glass, T. E. (1994b). Do you know buildings? Facility planning knowledge and skills. School Business Affairs, 60 (7), 16-19.

Glass, T. E. (1994a). Lost in space: Assessing the adequacy of school facilities. School Business Affairs, 60 (1), 13-20.

Grouws, D. A. (1995). Mathematics. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 97-109). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Hay, R. (1993). A collaboration in curriculum redesign. [On-line]. Momentum, 24 (3). Eisenhower Nation Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education. Available: http://www.enc.org/online ENC2340/2340.html.

Hu-DeHart, E. (1993). The history, development, and future of ethnic studies. Phi Delta Kappan, 75 (1), 50-54.

Illinois State Board of Education. (1996, August). An overview of issues related to school buildings and school infrastructure in Illinois. Paper presented at Annual Work Conference, Springfield, IL.

Lewis, A. C. (1995). Fixing the nation's schoolhouses. Phi Delta Kappan, 76 (8), 580-581.

Means, B., Olson, K., & Singh R. (1995). Beyond the classroom: Restructuring schools with technology. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (1), 69-72.

Mehlinger, H. D. (1996). School reform in the information age. Phi Delta Kappan, 77 (6), 400-407.

Miller, J. P. & Seller W. (1985). Curriculum: The decades ahead. In O'Connell R., Silverman, N. & Nelson, P. (Eds.), Curriculum: Perspectives and practice (pp. 330-343). White Plains, NY: Longman Inc.

National Assembly of Local Arts Agency. (1996). Building America's communities. Washington, D.C.: National Assembly of Local Arts Agency and NALAA's Institute for Community Development and the Arts.

National Research Center on Student Learning. (1993). Toward a new science of instruction: Programmatic investigations in cognitive science and education. [On-line]. Available: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/InstScience/exesum.html.

Peha, J. M. (1995). How K-12 teachers are using computer networks. Educational Leadership, 53 (2), 18-25.

Perry, C. D. (1995). Oral communication. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 87-95). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Prescott, C., Rinard, B., Cockerill, J., & Baker, N. (1996). Science through workplace lenses. Educational Leadership, 53 (8), 10-13.

Ramler, S. (1991). Global education for the 21st century. Educational Leadership, 48 (7), 44-49.

Rappoport, A. L., & Kletzien, S. (1996). Kids around town: Civics lessons leave impressions. Educational Leadership, 53 (8), 26-29.

Shaver, J. P. (1995). Social studies. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 145-161). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Shepherd, G. D. & Ragan, W. D. (1992). Modern elementary curriculum. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Squire, J. R. (1995). Language arts. In G. Cawelti (Ed.), Handbook of research on improving student achievement (pp. 71-86). Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

United States General Accounting Office. (1995). School facilities: America's schools not designed or equipped for 21st century. (GAO/HEHS-95-95). Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

United States General Accounting Office. (1996). School facilities: America's schools report differing conditions. (GAO/HEHS-96-103). Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Appendix

Cover Letter and Parent Questionnaire

VANCE SCHOOL

Lorraine Bailey
Principal
815 N. Main St.
Paris, IL 61944

Telephone 217-466-2410

March 20, 1997

Dear Parents,

We need your help! As District #95 continues to provide your children with the high quality education they deserve, we are asking for your input in this process. We would like to know how important you think the curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services listed on the enclosed questionnaire are for your children. Your responses will provide us direction and help us to continue to improve the educational process.

Please take a few minutes now, fill out both sides of the enclosed questionnaire, and return it in the enclosed envelope. **Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible, but no later than April 1, 1997.** The numbers on the questionnaire are for recording purposes only. Your responses are confidential. The district will use only survey totals, not individual responses.

If you have any questions, contact Lorraine Bailey at Vance School (466-2410). Thank you for your time and effort.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

For your child to have a high quality education, how important do you think the following curriculum areas, instructional techniques, and support services are? Please mark (X) your answer in the blank for each item. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire, please call Lorraine Bailey at 466-2410.

4-Very Important 3-Moderately Important 2-Somewhat Important 1-Not Important

CURRICULUM AREAS	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1. Writing skills	____	____	____	____
2. Listening skills	____	____	____	____
3. Speaking skills	____	____	____	____
4. Library or media center	____	____	____	____
5. Reading for information	____	____	____	____
6. Reading for enjoyment	____	____	____	____
7. Basic math skills (arithmetic)	____	____	____	____
8. Math for solving problems of everyday life	____	____	____	____
9. Math concepts	____	____	____	____
10. Learning-by-doing approach to understanding science	____	____	____	____
11. Education about the environment	____	____	____	____
12. Science laboratories	____	____	____	____
13. Global education in social studies	____	____	____	____
14. Studying social problems of the community	____	____	____	____
15. Understanding people of various races and cultures in the United States	____	____	____	____
16. Physical education program	____	____	____	____
17. Health education program	____	____	____	____
18. Dance	____	____	____	____
19. Drama	____	____	____	____
20. Music	____	____	____	____
21. Art	____	____	____	____

CURRICULUM AREAS	4	3	2	1
22. Computers--knowing how to operate	____	____	____	____
23. Computers--knowing how to access information	____	____	____	____
24. Internet	____	____	____	____
25. Instructional television	____	____	____	____
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
26. Activity-oriented education (think, explore, investigate)	____	____	____	____
27. Hands-on use of objects to solve problems	____	____	____	____
28. Large group instruction	____	____	____	____
29. Instruction which allows for children learning in different ways	____	____	____	____
30. Problem solving for real life situations	____	____	____	____
31. Small group instruction	____	____	____	____
32. Smaller class sizes	____	____	____	____
33. Children working in teams to solve problems	____	____	____	____
34. Children interacting in the decision-making process	____	____	____	____
35. Integration of different subject areas	____	____	____	____
36. Analyzing and understanding information	____	____	____	____
SUPPORT SERVICES	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
37. Title I (extra help for below average readers)	____	____	____	____
38. Speech therapy	____	____	____	____
39. Full-day kindergarten	____	____	____	____
40. Guidance counselors	____	____	____	____
41. Parent volunteer services	____	____	____	____
42. Parent education--how to help your child learn	____	____	____	____
43. Private areas for counseling and testing	____	____	____	____

SUPPORT SERVICES	4	3	2	1
44. A place in the school for people from social services to work with students	____	____	____	____
45. School nurse	____	____	____	____
46. Use of Public Health Department services in school	____	____	____	____
47. Before-school child care	____	____	____	____
48. After-school child care	____	____	____	____
49. Occupational therapy for students having difficulty with fine motor skills such as poor handwriting	____	____	____	____
50. Physical therapy for students having difficulty with gross motor skills such as hopping or jumping	____	____	____	____
51. Adaptive physical education--modifications for students that have physical needs	____	____	____	____